



Chief's Update
April 15, 2015

"Flux, Consistency, & Public Approval"

Dear Tempe Police Employees,

Based upon local, regional and national events, not a day goes by without some sort of news or commentary related to US law enforcement and their interactions with the public. Some are positive yet, many are not. Unfortunately, several high profile incidents have brought attention to our collective ability as law enforcement practitioners to provide fair, just, and professional police services to those we are entrusted to both protect AND serve.

Whether one agrees in full – or in part – with the commentary and, in some cases, the information provided by a countless number of talk show hosts, academics, and self-proclaimed police experts, one cannot deny the fact that our profession is in a state of flux - society's expectations of us, the services we provide, and the manner in which we provide them appear to be shifting.

In some communities, this shift is large and quite noticeable; in others, the shift is slight as police organizations ensure their priorities remain in line with the wants and needs of their citizenry.

Truth be told, the "Police Function" and our mandate has not changed since Sir Robert Peel outlined his *Principles of Modern Law Enforcement* in 1829 – aka the *Peelian Principles*.

Taught in some form or fashion to police recruits during their first few weeks at the police academy, the nine principles have stood the test of time and if you are interested, they can be found easily on the internet. In my opinion, all of the principles are important however, #7 puts what has been happening in American Law Enforcement into perspective.

The police at all times should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police; the police are the only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interest of the community welfare.

At this point, you may be asking yourself, 'Where is he going with this?' Well, I will tell you...As a career law enforcement officer, I believe that some unfortunately have lost sight of our profession's guiding principles. It is understandable that this can happen from time to time – especially in our ever-changing and technologically complex world in which we live. Further, in an age of countless unfunded mandates in which we must comply, and where the competition for public safety resources has reached an all-time high, US law enforcement has relied – and maybe at times too heavily – on strategies which has placed an emphasis and premium on "efficiency" rather than "communication" and the building of "relationships." The result, tenuous police/community relations in communities all across our great nation and a decline in the community's support for law enforcement.

Fortunately for us, here in Tempe, I believe we have not lost sight on our guiding principles and as Chief of Police for the past eight years, I have worked hard to place an emphasis on building strong and long-lasting relationships and partnerships; engaging in open, honest, and routine communication in a variety of mediums so as to reach all segments of our community; celebrating and promoting diversity – both internally and externally; utilizing and leveraging technology to fight crime; and most importantly, remaining accountable – at all times - to our community.

Granted, there is always room for improvement and there is always more that we can do – both individually and collectively – to serve our community. Yet, the results of this year's 2014 City of Tempe Community Survey (the public satisfaction survey conducted by the ETC Institute for the past eight years) demonstrates that not only are we in line with *Peelian Principle #7*, our citizens appreciate our efforts and wish to see a continued emphasis placed on "Police Services."

In short, 1,092 Tempe households were recently surveyed on a variety of topics related to City of Tempe services. A comprehensive study, the findings revealed the following:

- Most of the residents surveyed, who had an opinion, based on the combined percentages of "very satisfied" or "satisfied" were satisfied with overall quality of services in Tempe (90%), which is a 2% increase from the 2013 survey.
- The highest levels of satisfaction with Tempe customer service, based upon the combined percentage of "very satisfied" and "satisfied" responses among residents who had an opinion, were: the way residents were treated (84%) and how easy City employees were to contact (82%).
- Survey respondents felt the top three priorities for 2015 which should receive the most emphasis over the next year should be: Economic Development, Maintenance of Streets and Buildings, and Police Services/Neighborhoods.
- Overall satisfaction with quality of City services rated 34% above the national average (90% in Tempe vs. 56% U.S.).
- Satisfaction with the way you were treated by City employees rated 28% above the national average (84% in Tempe vs. 56% in U.S.)
- **80% of survey respondents indicated they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the quality of local police services – 6% higher than the national benchmark average.**
- 73% of survey respondents indicated they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the Enforcement of local traffic laws – 4% higher than the national benchmark average

It is clear that our collective efforts have yielded great results and I would like to extend a "thank you" to each and every Tempe Police employee. Similarly, I would like to challenge each of you to continue to go "above and beyond" when interacting with the public; take the extra few minutes to communicate effectively so as to de-escalate challenging interactions, do your part to build police/community relationships, and remember *Principle #7*... "*the police are the public and that the public are the police.*"

Stay Safe,

Tom Ryff
Chief of Police